

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 151035Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2733

INFO SECDEF WASHDC//ISA

JCS WASHDC J-5

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ//SCSA//

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0623

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, NS, US

SUBJ: US-SURINAM MILITARY RELATIONS

REF : (A) STATE 129149 (260017Z MAY 76), (B) PARAMARIBO 0335
(271037Z MAY 76)

SUMMARY: SURINAM'S MILITARY CONTINUES TO SHOW INTEREST IN COOPERATION WITH US PARTICULARLY IN AREAS OF TRAINING AND LOGISTICAL SUPPLY. SIGNALS COMING FROM BOTH ARMY LEADERSHIP AND DUTCH MILITARY ADVISER INDICATE CLEAR PREFERENCE THAT SURINAM LOOK TO WESTERN HEMISPHERE COUNTRIES FOR DEFENSE NEEDS, BUT WE REMAIN UNCONVINCED USG INTERESTS CALL FOR ANY CHANGE IN PRESENT POLICY OF SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE FMS CASH PURCHASES ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. END SUMMARY.

1. JULY 12-13 VISIT OF USCINCSO STAFF OFFICERS LTC JESSE HAYNES AND CDR DUDLEY MCALLISTER, RECOMMENDED BY DEPARTMENT IN REF A, PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION AND REVIEW, INTERNALLY AND WITH SURINAMERS, OF SURINAM'S
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MILITARY SITUATION AND NEEDS, AS WELL AS FOR EXPLANATION OF

FMS PROCEDURES TO EMBASSY AND COL. ELSTAK, COMMANDER OF THE SURINAM ARMY (SKM). HAYNES AND MCALLISTER ALSO CALLED ON DUTCH MILITARY ADVISER COL. H. VALK.

2. ALTHOUGH VALK PAINTED A DISMAL PICTURE OF SKM'S PRESENT CONDITION, A THOROUGH INSPECTION OF SKM'S HEADQUARTERS INDICATED THAT ELSTAK WAS LEFT A GOOD STOCK OF SUPPLIES AND AN ADEQUATE PHYSICAL ESTABLISHMENT TO MEET MOST OF HIS CURRENT NEEDS. IT SEEMS CLEAR FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH ELSTAK AND VALK THAT THE SKM'S BIGGEST NEED IS FOR ADDITIONAL SKILLED PERSONNEL. VALK CALLED MAINTENANCE THE BIGGEST PROBLEM AND OBSERVED THAT THE SKM JUST DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH OFFICERS (17) AND MEN (500-600) TO GO AROUND.

3. MUCH OF ELSTAK'S EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING M-2 CARBINES AND 57 MM RECOILLESS RIFLES IS OLD, AND IT WILL OBVIOUSLY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SKM'S EXPANSION PLANS (ELSTAK SAID HE HOPES TO HAVE TWO PER CENT OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION, I.E., 6,000-7,000 MEN, IN UNIFORM AFTER TEN YEARS). HE IS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT SUPPLIES OF REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT PARTS FOR ITEMS HE MAY ORDER AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN TYING THE SKM INTO THE U.S. LOGISTICS SYSTEM.

4. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT NEITHER VALK NOR ELSTAK WISH TO SEE THE SKM RELY TOO HEAVILY ON THE DUTCH FOR SURINAM'S MILITARY NEEDS. BOTH MEN THOUGHT IT UNNATURAL FOR A COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE TO LOOK TO A COUNTRY IN EUROPE FOR DEFENSE. ACCORDING TO VALK, THE DUTCH ARE PREPARED TO SUPPLY NEEDED AMMUNITION AND REPAIR PARTS FOR CARBINES ON A CASH BASIS, AND HE EXPECTED SOME TRAINING TO CONTINUE IN HOLLAND. HOWEVER, VALK SPECIFICALLY CITED THE U.S. AND BRAZIL AS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE NETHERLANDS, WHILE ELSTAK EMPHASIZED THAT AN INDEPENDENT SURINAM MUST MAKE ITS OWN DECISIONS AND POINTED OUT HOW FAR AWAY THE NETHERLANDS WAS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

5. WE EXPLAINED OUR BELIEF THAT SURINAM, SHARING A COMMON TRADITION AND LANGUAGE WITH THE DUTCH, MIGHT FIND IT MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO CONTINUE TO LOOK TO THE DUTCH FOR ASSISTANCE IN MEETING ITS DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS AND OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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PREFERENCE THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP CONTINUE IN SO FAR AS THE DUTCH CAN MEET SURINAM'S NEEDS. VALK AND ELSTAK BOTH SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND THIS POSITION BUT DID NOT MODIFY THEIR OWN CLEARLY EXPRESSED VIEWS.

6. ELSTAK INQUIRED SEVERAL TIMES ABOUT POSSIBILITIES FOR TRAINING IN THE U.S. OR THE CANAL ZONE. HAYNES AND MCALLISTER EXPLAINED THAT GRANT TRAINING ASSISTANCE IS NOT

NOW AVAILABLE TO SURINAM WHICH IS NOT ON THE DESIGNATED LIST OF MAP TRAINING COUNTRIES FOR FY 1977. THEY ADDED THAT TRAINING FOR CASH COULD BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS AT ANY TIME. ELSTAK EXPRESSED INTEREST IN GETTING ON THE LIST OF COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT TRAINING, BUT THOUGHT THAT HE COULD AFFORD TO PAY FOR TRAINING HE MIGHT REQUIRE IN THE MEANTIME. AS EXAMPLES HE MENTIONED ORDNANCE TRAINING (AMMUNITION TECHNICIAN) AND SOME NAVAL TRAINING IN CONNECTION WITH THREE RIVER PATROL CRAFT HE HAS AT PRESENT AND THREE COASTAL PATROL VESSELS AND ONE HIGH SEAS PATROL BOAT HE EXPECTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

7. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR OUR POSITION THAT SURINAM SHOULD CONTINUE TO LOOK TO THE DUTCH TO MEET ITS DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE CAN CARRY US ONLY SO FAR. WE CAN EXPECT REQUESTS FROM ELSTAK FOR TRAINING (HE SEEMS TO PREFER THE CANAL ZONE, WHICH HE VISITED LAST YEAR) AND PERHAPS FOR REPAIR PARTS, AMMUNITION, AND RIFLES. HELI-COPTERS AND SMALL TWO ENGINE FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT (CESSNAS, TWIN OTTERS) ARE ALSO ON HIS MIND.

8. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NO FORMAL REQUESTS FROM THE GOS FOR ANYTHING AS YET; AND WE HAVE SEEN THAT ELSTAK CAN GET WELL OUT AHEAD OF HIS GOVERNMENT. PM ARRON HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WISHES MILITARY MATTERS TO GO THROUGH HIM, AND WE SHOULD NOT OURSELVES MOVE OUT AHEAD OF THE PM. ON THE CONTRARY, WE BELIEVE WE CAN AND SHOULD CONTINUE OUR PRESENT POLICY AS OUTLINED IN STATE 129149.

9. WE SHOULD GIVE SOME THOUGHT, HOWEVER, TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER WE WOULD ADD SURINAM TO THE LIST OF COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR GRANT TRAINING IF THE GOS SHOULD FORMALLY REQUEST THIS. IN PARTICULAR, WE WOULD NOT WANT THE
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POSSIBILITY OF DOING SO RULED OUT BY FAILURE TO INCLUDE CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR SUCH A DESIGNATION IN PRELIMINARY DRAFTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATION, ETC. IF WE ARE GIVING GRANT TRAINING TO ALMOST ALL THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA, THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE NO COGENT REASON TO REFUSE EQUAL TREATMENT TO SURINAM. THE FORM AND AMOUNT OF SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION, BUT THE POSSIBILITY IN PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN WASHINGTON.
ZURHELLEN

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